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SUBJECT: POTUS CODEL, ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE EXCHANGE
VIEWS ON CALDERON'S ANTI-CRIME EFFORTS

¶1. (U) Summary. Representatives from the Mexican Attorney General's (PGR) Office met with a group of U.S. Congressional members traveling with POTUS April 16 to discuss challenges in the GOM's efforts to combat organized crime. They stressed the importance of trust between the U.S. and Mexico in taking on organized crime and requested the U.S. do more to obstruct the flow of weapons into Mexico from the U.S. The Congressional members praised the GOM's efforts and assured the PGR officials they would step up efforts to address their concerns about arms trafficking. End Summary.

¶2. (U) A group of Congressional members traveling with POTUS on his trip to Mexico April 16-17 included Sen. Max Baucus (Montana), Rep. Javier Becerra (CA), Rep. Sam Farr (CA), Rep. Kendrick Meek (FL), Rep. Charlie Rangel (NY), Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (TX), and Rep. Nydia Velasquez (NY). The group of PGR officials that met with the Congressional members consisted of Marsela Morales Ibanez, Deputy Attorney General; Irving Barrios Mojica, General Coordinator for the Specialized Unit of Investigations of Crimes Against Health; Adrian Franco Zevada, International Affairs Coordinator; Leopoldo Velardo, General Director for Extraditions and Legal Assistance; Ariel Moutsatso Morales, Special Advisor to the Attorney General; and Oscar Rocha Dabrowski, Special Advisor to the Attorney General.

¶3. (SBU) Special Advisor Rocha described the great strides the U.S. and Mexico had made in terms of cooperation in combating organized crime. The unprecedented cooperation between our two countries had produced major achievements both in terms of record seizures and the arrests of major crime figures. Trust was key. The PGR was implementing a strict and comprehensive vetting program of its own people. All of those attending the meeting with the Congressional members had been administered a polygraph test. He noted that the Attorney General's former deputy had been arrested for ties to organized crime, an event that hurt PGR morale at the time but reinforced how serious the government was about cleaning house.

¶4. (SBU) In response to Sen. Baucus' question about how President Calderon's efforts were playing politically and what the U.S. could do to support him, Rocha made two points.

-- First, he noted that Calderon was under pressure to show results. Sustained levels of high violence raised questions about the efficacy of his program. Some segments of the Mexican public, he said, even suggested it was time for the government to strike an agreement with the cartels. This was unthinkable for law enforcement officials involved in this fight. Calderon's unwavering commitment to turn back the tide of organized crime and transform Mexico into a "normal" country was inspiring for them.

-- Second, Mexico blamed the high levels of violence seen across the country on the flow of weapons entering Mexico from the U.S. Two-thirds of the weapons seized in Mexico are

assault weapons brought in from the U.S. If the U.S. wanted to demonstrate its support for Mexico and President Calderon, the best thing it could do would be to stop the flow of weapons across the border. At the end, Mexico couldn't speak to whether the U.S. needed to enact new legislation, or if instead, more effective implementation of existing legislation was the answer. That was for the U.S. decide. The U.S. Congressional members signaled they were prepared to do more on this issue mainly through dedicating greater resources; they indicated adopting new legislation including on assault weapons would face serious opposition and wasn't presently on the table. Sen. Baucus suggested the GOM invite NRA representatives to Mexico in an effort to sensitize them to the challenges Mexico is facing and seek their support; the Mexican representatives indicated that had already extended an invitation but had not received a response.

15. (SBU) Rep. Rangel signaled his own opposition to the legalization of drugs and asked where Mexico stood on this issue. Rocha suggested that movement in some U.S. states towards the legalization marijuana sent Mexico mixed signals. Half of the proceeds of cartels trafficking drugs into the U.S. came from marijuana sales. Mexico would like to see the U.S. do more to crack down on marijuana trafficking.

16. (SBU) Comment. Mexico's PGR representatives spoke well to the importance the GOM attaches to cooperation with the U.S. in efforts to combat organized crime. They recognize building trust between our two countries is essential. Mexico has made significant strikes in fighting corruption but is not out of the woods yet. It appreciates U.S. support and looks forward to the day when cooperation and trust will

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be routine components of our relationship.

17. (U) POTUS CODEL members did not have an opportunity to clear on this message before their departure.

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